

أسرار النبي



Secrets of the Prophet



notes for a talk given by:

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on the occasion of

Milād an-Nabī

1432/2011



وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

wa māā ʾarsalnākāā ʾillā-rahmatal-li-l-ʿālamīn

And We have not sent you except as a Mercy for all the worlds.
(Sūratu-l-ʾAmbiyāā 21:107)



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2011/1432

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَإِذَا جَاءَكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ
كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ

wa °idhā jāā°aka-l-ladhīna yu°minūna bi-āyātina
fa-qul salāmun °alaykum
kataba rabbukum °ala nafsihi-r-raḥmah

And when those who believe in Our revelations come to you,
say: Peace be upon you!

Your Lord has written Mercy on His Self.

(Sūratu-l-°An°ām 6:54)



وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

wa māā °arsalnāka °illā-raḥmatal-li-l-°ālamīn

And We have not sent you except as a Mercy for all the worlds.

(Sūratu-l-°Ambiyā° 21:107)



قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَتَّبِعُ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ مِنْ رَبِّي
هَذَا بَصَائِرُ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ
qul °innamāā °attabi°u mā yūḥāā °ilayya mir-rabbī;
hadhā baṣā°iru mir-rabbikum

wa hudañw-wa raḥmatul-li-qawmiñy-yu°minūn

Say, 'I follow only what has been revealed to me from my Lord.'

This is clear insight from your Lord,
and guidance and mercy for people who believe.

(Sūratu-l-A°rāf 7:203)



وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً

wa-°idh qāla rabbuka li-l-malāā°ikati innī jā°ilun fi-l-arḍi khalīfah

And [remember] when your Sustainer said to the angels:
“Truly, I am about to establish upon earth one who shall inherit it.”

(Sūratu-l-Baqarah 2:30)

قَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ
مَلَنِ كَانَ يَرْجُو اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

qadā kāna lakum fī rasūli-llāhi ʾuswatun ḥasanatun
li-mān kāna yarju-llāha wa-l-yawma-l-ʾākħira
wa dhakara-llāha kathīrā

You have an excellent model in the Messenger of Allāh,
for all who put their hope in Allāh and the Last Day
and remember Allāh much.

(Sūratu-l-Aḥzāb 33:21)



In a ḥadīth related to us by at-Tirmidhī رحمه الله, the Prophet ﷺ says:

“Awwalu mā khalaqa-llāhu nūran.”

“The first [thing] created by Allāh ﷻ was Light.”

Allāh ﷻ conceived His creation in the darkness of non-existence and with the light of His creative act – *kun faya kūn* (كن فيكون) – brought everything into existence. The First Light created was like a shadow appearing against the dark background of non-existence.

at-Tirmidhī also reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, “The first thing Allāh ﷻ created was the Intellect (*al-ʿaql*/العقل).” He ﷺ also said, “The first thing that Allāh ﷻ created was the Pen (*al-qalam*/القلم).”

The Intellect takes from Allāh ﷻ without intermediary, the bearer of all known things. None of the knowledge of higher and lower being is hidden from it. It is the primordial light in its passive aspect as recipient of the knowledge of what is to be, while the Pen is the primordial light in its active aspect of writing this knowledge on the Guarded Tablet at the command of Allāh ﷻ. “The first thing that Allāh ﷻ created was the Pen and He ﷻ said to it: ‘Write! So it wrote what is to be forever.’ (at-Tabaranī and Abu Nuʾaym)

From this First Light all of creation, with all its many varied forms and meanings, unfolds till the end of time. This primordial light is called *Light of Muḥammad* ﷺ (*nūru-l-muḥamaddiyyah*/نور المحمدية) – which is the first light against the dark background of non-existence.

In another variant it is related that Jābir ibn ʿAbd Allāh said to the Prophet ﷺ: “O Messenger of Allāh, may my father and mother be sacrificed for you, tell me of the first thing Allāh ﷻ created before all things.” He said: “O Jābir, the first thing Allāh ﷻ created was the light of your Prophet from His light, and that light remained (lit. ‘turned’) in the midst of His Power for as long as He wished, and there was not, at that time, a Tablet or a Pen or a Paradise or a Fire or an angel or a heaven or an earth. And when Allāh ﷻ wished to create creation, he divided that Light into four parts and from the first made the Pen, from the second the Tablet, from the third the Throne, [and from the fourth everything else].”

“ana mina-l-lāhi wa al-muʿminūna minnī.”

“I am from Allāh ﷻ
and the people of belief are from me.”

“inna-llāha kḥalaqa rūḥa-n-nabiyyi min ḍḥātihi
wa kḥalaqa al-ʿālama bi ʿasrihi min-nūri muḥammadin .”

“Truly, Allāh created the Spirit of the Prophet from His Essence,
then He created the whole Universe of forms
and (veiled) all its secrets with the Light of Muhammad.”

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Gilāni رحمه الله, in his book *Sirr al-asrar fi ma yahtaju ilayh al-ʿabrār*, said: “Know that since Allāh ﷻ first created the soul of Muḥammad ﷺ from the light of His beauty, as He said: ‘I created Muḥammad from the light of My Face,’ and as the Prophet ﷺ said: ‘The first thing Allāh ﷻ created is my soul, and the first thing Allāh ﷻ created is the Pen, and the first thing Allāh ﷻ created is the Intellect’ — what is meant by all this is one and the same thing, and that is the *ḥaqiqatu-l-muḥammadiyyah* (الحقيقة المحمدية). However, it was named a light because it is completely purified from darkness, as Allāh ﷻ said: ‘There has come to you from Allāh a Light and a Clear Book.’ It was also named an Intellect (ʿaql/عقل) because it is the cause for the transmission of knowledge, and the Pen (*qalam/قلم*) is the means by which it wrote in the world of letters. The Muḥammadan soul (*ar-rūḥu-l-muḥammadiyyah*/الروح المحمدية) is therefore the quintessence of all created things and the first of them and their origin.

Secrets of the Prophet ﷺ أسرار النبي

The Prophet ﷺ said: “I am from Allāh ﷻ and the believers are from me, and Allāh ﷻ created all souls from me in the spiritual world and He did so in the best form. It is the name of the totality of mankind in that primordial world, and after its creation by four thousand years, Allāh ﷻ created the Throne (*al-‘arsh/العرش*) from the Light of Muḥammad himself ﷺ, and from it the rest of creation.”

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ

وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ ؕ

قَالُوا بَلَى ۖ شَهِدْنَا ۚ أَنْ تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ

wa-‘idh ‘akhadha rabbuka mim-banī ‘ādama

min ḍhuhūrihim ḍhurriyyatahum

wa ‘ashhadahum ‘alā ‘ānḥfusihim ‘alastu bi-rabbikum ;

qālū balā shahidānā ;

an taqūlū yawma-l-qiyāmati ‘innā kunnā ‘ān hadhā ghāfilīn

When your Sustainer took out all their descendants

from the loins of the children of Adam

and made them testify against themselves ‘Am I not your Lord?’

they said, ‘We testify that indeed You are!’

Lest you say on the Day of Rising, ‘We knew nothing about this.’

(Sūratu-l-A‘rāf 7:172)



These are from the Secrets of Muḥammad ﷺ – at the same time there are some who believe that Muḥammad ﷺ is not more than an illiterate Messenger, chosen by Allāh ﷻ to carry His Message to the people of the earth and, whilst they rever him for that and live by the Message, they know no more of who he was than that and then there are those who know more and have been privledged, as they are truly the believers, to see more deeply into the reality of what is and what is not and who he was ﷺ and who he is ﷺ.

لَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُفْتَدٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتٌ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ

lā taqūlū li-maṇy-yuqtalu fī sabīli-l-lāhi ‘amwāt:

bal aḥyā‘a‘uñw-wa lākil-lā tash‘urūn

do not say those who have died in the way of Allāh are dead –

they are living but you do not know how.

(Sūratu-l-Baqarah 2:154)

During the mawālids of the last few years we have spoken at length both on the historical reality of the Prophet ﷺ and also the circumstances that led from Makkah to Madinah — from thirteen years and a mere 170 followers to the events surrounding his emigration (hijrah/هجرة) in the year 620 of the common era, followed by ten years in which the whole of the Arabian peninsula (*al-jazīratu-l-ʿarabiyyah*) accepted the Message which, in turn, lead to the present worldwide community of one billion plus people.

This year I would like to speak about those who know more and have been privledged to know the deep reality of the Prophet ﷺ and very importantly, who he is as well as who he was: those whom we call the ʿawliyāʾ karam, the shuyukḥ, murshidūn and pīrs (پیر).

In this particular context I also want to address the vital differences between the “official” ʿIslām and that of the Ṣūfis who, to a greater degree than either the Sunnis or the Shiʿah, are the heirs and inheritors of his ﷺ secret and the practioners of that secret in our time.

Taking this as a starting point I ask the reader to consider the following received media information which maybe true in part or full:

“It is believed that upward of 80% of the Mosques in the U.S belong to the Wahhabi school of thought, largely due to the huge Saudi petro dollar spending. The Saudi government has spent an unbelievable \$87B to promote Wahhabism in the United States, Africa, Southeast Asia and Europe. Saudi aid to Muslims abroad, however, comes with strings attached, and most of the recipient institutions end up promoting the Wahhabi version of Islam. In this context Wahhabi agents have sought to impose their ideology on all who attend the mosques they control. The Saudis have allocated considerable line-item space toward building religious institutions that promote the Wahhabi version of Islam. The Saudis have funded more than 80 percent of the Wahhabi-influenced mosques built in the United States within the last 20 years. It is believed that most of the new American converts to Islam follow the Wahhabi/Salafi version of Islam, due largely to the fact that most of the Mosques in the U.S are under Wahhabi control, although the Wahhabi/Salafi are a small minority within the larger Muslim world. An estimated 30,000 Muslim children now attend Saudi-funded Wahhabi day schools in America.”

“The Saudis, meanwhile, have directed considerable outreach toward the Afro-American Muslim community which is largest Muslim community in America. In one effort to showcase the bounties of Wahhabism to this target audience, King Fahd pledged \$8M for a lavish mosque in shabby South Central Los Angeles. The Saudis’ Islamic Development Bank pledged an additional \$295,000 for a school attached to the mosque. From the Saudi perspective, this and other similar contributions are less an expense than an investment.”

What, you may ask, does this have to do with understanding the secrets of the Prophet ﷺ?

Though what I have quoted above has mainly to do with the situation affecting Muslims in America, the same circumstances hold true across the wider Muslim world where, for the past fifty to seventy-five years, or really since the post WWII rise of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a major petro-power in the world, the advocates and adherents of Wahhabism or Salafism or Deobandism or what one person has called Archaic Revivalism or, simply, neo-Kḥarijism, have actively sought to promote their ideas of who and what the Prophet ﷺ of ʿIslām is or is not and, for the most part, these views are contradictory to the traditional views that the world wide Muslim community has held for centuries of the Prophet ﷺ, to the point where, increasingly, the Muslim community is less and less aware of the sublime character and stature of the Prophet ﷺ.

And it is not a side issue to say that the strenuous opposition on the behalf of these Najdi neo-Kḥarijites to the holding and observation of the Mawlid is part and parcel of the campaign to cause and bring about the loss of this traditional knowledge and understanding, nor is it a side issue to point out that, famously, when asked to give his blessing to Najd, the Prophet ﷺ refused three times to do so.

In the beginning of this talk and essay I quoted the ḥadīth of Jābir ᷚ to the effect that the first thing created by Allāh ﷻ was the light of the Prophet ﷺ. The neo-Kḥarijites strenuously deny the veracity of this ḥadīth and the many understandings that stem from it.

On the contrary, they say: “The whole of Sufism and all other sects that believe in the transfer of esoteric knowledge (hidden knowledge) from wali (saint) to wali depend on this single hadith [which follows] which is not in any way authentic.”

“It is related that Jābir ibn ʿAbdullāh رضي الله عنه said to the Prophet ﷺ: ‘Oh Messenger of Allāh, may my father and mother be sacrificed for you, tell me of the first thing Allāh created before all things.’ He said: ‘Oh Jābir, the first thing Allāh created was the light of your Prophet from His light, and that light remained [lit. ‘turned’] in the midst of His Power for as long as He wished and there was not, at that time, a Tablet or a Pen or a Paradise or a Fire or an Angel or a Heaven or an Earth. And when Allāh wished to create creation, he divided that Light into four parts and from the first made the Pen, from the second the Tablet, from the third the Throne, [and from the fourth everything else].’

“This hadith implies that Allāh (SWT) first created the Light (*nūr*/نور) of the Prophet (PBUH) and from that everything else was created. This is why some sects claim that Muḥammad (PBUH) was the very first prophet, not ʿĀdam (SAW). They also use this hadith to prove the superiority of Muḥammad (PBUH) to other prophets.

“It is a very famous hadith, but not in any way a reliable but it is important for sects (and especially Sufism) to believe in this legend.

“To conclude, Allāh (SWT), is a reality that cannot be described and we should refrain from attributing any connection between Him and that which He has created. Muḥammad (PBUH) was a man, who was special only because he was chosen by Allāh ﷻ to communicate the message of Islam. Muḥammad (PBUH) was a *bashar* (man), who suffered pain and experienced joy, lived a remarkable life and, after completing his mission, died a natural death. His soul is now in Jannat (the Garden), in a place closest to Allāh (SWT).”¹

A quick visit to Google will reveal entry after entry all more or less saying the same thing which is that basically the Prophet ﷺ was simply “a *bashar* (man), who suffered pain and experienced joy, lived a remarkable life and, after completing his mission, died a natural death.” And no more (or less) than that.

Yes like a diamond or a ruby or an emerald is just a plain old rock.

1. The reader will please forgive the use of the acronym (PBUH) instead of “prayers of Allāh upon him and his family and peace (ﷺ) and (SAW) for “peace be upon him” ﷺ and the use of (SWT) after the Name of Allāh (ﷻ). The quote is used as it appeared in a Salafi text.

This dumbing down or trivialization of the the Prophet ﷺ is part and parcel of the whole campaign of the Wahhabis, the Salafis, the Deobandis and the neo-Kharijites and, if truth be told, of first the Umayyads and then the Abbāsids and, indeed, most all of those often corrupt and cruel and mainly self-appointed ‘leaders’ who have ruled the Muslim ‘ummah since the death of al-Ḥusayn ﷺ.²

The idea or agenda behind all of this trivialization or the minimalization of the miraculous nature of the Prophet ﷺ is basically to turn him into a man like all other men using the Qur’ānic ‘ayāt:

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُمُ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ

qul ‘innamā ‘ana basharum-mithlukum
yūha ‘ilayyā ‘annamā ‘ilāhukum ‘ilāhuñw-wāhidā

“Say (O Muhammad): I am only a man like you.
It has been revealed to me that your God is One God.”
(Sūrat-l-Kahf 18:110)

and

قَالَتْ لَهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ إِنْ نَحْنُ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ

qālat lahum rusuluhum ‘in naḥnu ‘illā basharun mithlukum

Their messengers said to them:
“We are nothing but mortals like yourselves.”
(Sūrah ‘Ibrāhīm 14:11)

There are, of course, many reasons to devalue or lessen his stature by reducing it to that of an ‘everyman’ with the sole concession that Allāh ﷻ chose him ﷺ to deliver the Message and, perhaps, to be the guide for the people, though that aspect is often played down as there should be no hint that revelation and leadership should be joined in the same person lest people expect that of their ‘leaders’.

2. There are those who object to saying “alayhi salām” (ﷺ) or “peace be upon him” after mentioning al-Ḥusayn ﷺ or other members of the family ﷺ of the Prophet ﷺ. I would remind those who take objection to this that in every ṣalāt we say, “Oh Allāh send your blessing on the Prophet Muḥammad and the *family* of Muḥammad and send Your Blessings upon Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim.”

The reasoning behind this is that the common people should not look to their leader (or ruler) to be in any way a source of guidance and, especially, not Divine Guidance, lest the ruler or leader be held to a higher standard than the ‘everyman’ (which of course he should be). Religion as such is merely a ‘legalistic religion’ which knows no priesthood, no rites and no sacrifice and the ‘spiritual’ responsibility of the leader or ruler is but to maintain law and order, keep the masājid open, be sure the reading of Qur’ān is taught and insure that a form of ‘legalistic’ ʿIslām is propagated which either says nothing about, or outright rejects, every and any form of spirituality (which is derisively termed, almost in the form of a curse, as ‘ṣufism’), and reduces the practice of religion to the passive assimilation and mechanical application of various rules and regulations.

This form of ʿIslām is what I have come to understand to be a kind of parallel ʿIslām or synthetic ʿIslām.

Needless to say such a saying as that of Shāykh ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Gilānī رحمه الله in his book *Sirr al-asrar fī ma yahtaju ilayh al-abrār*: “Know that since Allāh ﷻ first created the soul of Muḥammad ﷺ from the Light of His beauty” is total anathema to such Muslims.

Indeed from within the borders and bounds of parallel or synthetic ʿIslām there is no such possibility and one cannot even begin to speak of the Secrets of Muḥammad ﷺ as they simply don’t exist. In parallel or synthetic ʿIslām, Muḥammad ﷺ is a simply a highly respected but, ultimately, an orphaned illiterate messenger.

Even such widely accepted accounts of his birth as the narration of al-Tabarānī, who said that the Prophet ﷺ said: “My mother saw in a dream that there came from between her legs a lamp that illuminated the palaces of Syria.” or the narration of Aḥmad (#16700) that al-ʿIrbād ibn Sāriyah said that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said... and he mentioned the ḥadīth according to which the mother of the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ saw, when she gave birth to him, a light which illuminated the palaces of Syria, or the saying of al-Haythamī in *Majmaʿ al-Zawāʿid* and al-Ḥāfiḍ ibn Hajar in *al-Fath*, “When she gave birth there came forth from her a light which illuminated the house...” strains their ability to come to grasp with the truths contained in these sayings, even those these ʿaḥādīth are further support-

ed by another ḥadīth of al-ʿIrbād ibn Sāriyah. He said: “I heard the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ say: ‘I was the slave of Allāh and the Seal of the Prophets when ʿĀdām was still in the form of mud on the ground, and I will tell you that I am the answer to the prayer of the father of ʿIbārahīm, the glad tidings of ʿIsā conveyed concerning me, and the dream that the mothers of the Prophets saw and that my mother saw when she gave birth to me ﷺ, which was a light which illuminated the palaces of Syria.’ Narrated by Aḥmad and classed as ṣāḥiḥ by Ibn Hibbān and al-Hākim.

There are those, always, who say “Ahh yes. But by light we do not mean real or actual light itself, but what we mean when we say that he was light is that he was guidance for the people. The use of the word light (*nūr*/نور) in this instance is merely metaphorical.”

So, if by “Light” is simply meant Guidance, and the use of the word in reference to the Prophet ﷺ, such as the “Light of the Prophet ﷺ” refers to his removing the “Darkness of Ignorance from this world”, we would then ask such people what is meant then by this ḥadīth:

1. ʿUmmu-l-Muʿminīn ʿĀʿishā ؓ who states: “It was the time of *sahri* (ie.; the dark just before dawn prayers) and I was sewing something when the needle fell on the floor. Just then the Prophet ﷺ entered the room and due to the stream of light flowing from his ﷺ blessed face, I found the needle.” (*Kḥasāisu-l-Kubra* page 156 Volume 1— *Hujatu-llahi ʿAla-l-ʿĀlamīn* 688 — *ʿAqīdatu-sh-Shuhādāʾ* 102 - *Qasas ul ʿAmbiyāʾ* .

What was this light flowing from the face of the Holy Prophet ?

Guidance or Real Light? It is hard to find a needle by using metaphors but real and actual light makes it easy to see in the darkness, as in:

2. Mulla ʿAli Qarī and ʿAllāmah Jalalu-d-dīn as-Suyuti ؓ both narrate that ʿUmmu-l-Muʿminīn ʿĀʿishā ؓ states, “In totally dark nights, I used to put the thread into a needle with the help of the Noor of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.” (*Shāra Shifāʾ* – Hashīa Nasīmu-r Riaz page 328 Volume 1)

Or further consider this ḥadīth from Abu Hurairah ؓ who states,

“When the beloved Prophet ﷺ smiled the walls use to glow with his Nūr.” (Ref. *Muwahibu-l-Ladaniyah* page 271 Volume 1 of *ʿAn-wāru-l-Muḥammadiyah* page 133 - *Shifāʾ Sharīf* pg 39 - Hashia-sh-Shamāʾil at-Tirmidhī page 16 - *Shara Shifāʾ* Mulla ʿAlī Qarī, *Shara Shifāʾ* – Hashia Nasīmu-r Riaz page 338 Volume 1 - *Madari-ju-n-Nabu-wiyyah* page 12 - *Hujatu-llahi ʿAla-l-ʿAlamīn* page 689)

Also we find in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukḥarī Volume 1, Book 8, Number 454: Narrated by Anās bin Malik رضى الله عنه: “Once, on a dark night, two of the companions رضى الله عنه of the Prophet ﷺ departed (after a meeting with the Prophet ﷺ) and were led by two lights like lamps lighting the road in front of them. And when they parted, each of them was accompanied by one of these lights till he reached his house.”

Guidance? Well of course that too but — in reality — Light.

This what all the deniers don’t understand and continue to deny. They will accept that metaphorically the Prophet ﷺ was Light – but a metaphorical light – the Light of Guidance – and for the deniers that is where it stops. The deeper point is, not that they are bad people, but they cannot see, they do not see and they will not see!

صُمُّ بُكْمٌ عُمًى فَهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ

summun bukmun ʿumyun fahum lā yarjiʿūn

Deaf, dumb, and blind, they will not return [to the path].

(Sūratu-l-Baqarah 2:18)

We should note that the evidence of the Prophethood of our Prophet ﷺ is not limited to this “sign” of light (nūr/نور). Whether one takes this as proven or not, his ﷺ Prophethood is proven by definitive evidence which no one can deny and those who deny it do so out of their own ignorance or arrogance.

So whether one is exclusively from *ʾahlu-dḥ-ḍḥāhir* or the people of the outer knowledge or *ʾahlu-l-dḥ-ḍḥāhir wa-l-bāṭin* or the people of both outer and inner knowledge, the argument is not about the Prophethood (nubūwah/النبوة) of our Prophet ﷺ but rather about the inner dimension of the Prophethood and the Prophet ﷺ.

So if you call it Light, or you call it Guidance, or you call it Pen, or you call it Tablet (lawḥ/لوح) or you call it Mercy to us it is the same.

Allāh ﷻ declares of Himself:

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ مِثْلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ ۚ
 الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ ۚ الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ
 يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ
 يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ ۚ
 نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ ۚ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ ۚ
 وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

Allāhu nūru-s-samāwāti wa-l-arḍ;
 mathālu nūrihi kamishkātin fihā mişbāḥ ; al-miṣbāḥu fī zujājah;
 az-zujājatu kāʾannahā kawkabun durriyyun;
 yūqadu min shajaratim-mubārakatin zaytūnatin;
 lā sharqiyyatin wa lā gharbiyyah ;
 yakādu zaytuhā yuḍīʾu wa law lam tamsashu nār;
 nūrun ʿala nūr;
 yahdi-llāhu li-nūrihi maʿny-yashāʾu
 wa yaḍribu-llāhu-l-ʾamthāla li-n-nās ;
 wa-llāhu bi-kulli shayʾin ʿalīm

Allāh is the Light of the heavens and the earth.

A metaphor of His Light is that of a niche in which is a lamp,
 the lamp is inside a glass [and] the glass is like a brilliant star,
 lit from a blessed tree – an olive, neither of the east nor of the west,
 whose oil almost glows [of itself] though no fire touches it.

Light upon Light.

Allāh guides to His Light whoever He wills
 and Allāh makes examples for mankind
 and Allāh has knowledge of all things.

(Sūratu-n-Nūr 24:35)

“I am the Guide of all of the beings of the heavens and the earth.
 The metaphor of My Guidance is that I made Muḥammad ﷺ from
 My Light from which people get guidance like the niche which con-
 tains a lamp. The niche is the heart of Muḥammad ﷺ and the lamp
 is the Light of Knowledge in his heart.”

Secrets of the Prophet ﷺ أسرار النبي

And this Light is precisely – Raḥmah – a Name reserved only for Allāh ﷻ but by which He enobled His Beloved when He declared.

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

wa māā °arsalnāka °illā-rahmatal-li-l-°ālamīn

And We have not sent you except as a Mercy for all the worlds.

(Sūratu-l-°Ambiyāā° 21:107)

Again — Light, Mercy, Guidance, Pen, Tablet, Knowledge – all of these are the bestowals of Allāh ﷻ upon our Muḥammad ﷺ and all these are part of both His ﷻ Secret and the secret of His Rasūl ﷺ.

This is no orphaned illiterate delivery boy by any stretch of the imagination or, indeed, lack of it.

Far from it. In truth the reason why the people of the outer (*adh-dhāhir*/الظاهر) cannot see this, and remain deaf, dumb and blind, is because they cannot see it in themselves and so, not seeing it within themselves, and simultaneously taking themselves to be the measure of the universe and all beings, they cannot imagine it in another. As Shaykh Muḥammad al-Jamal in *Music of the Soul* quoting Sayyid-inā °Alī ؑ counselling such people, says, “do not think you are a small star when you contain the whole universe within you.” If you do not know who you are how can you possibly know who he is?

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ
وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا °

وَلَا تُطْعِ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَن ذِكْرِنَا

wa-ṣ-bir nafsaka ma°a-l-ladhīna yad°ūna rabbahum

bi-l-ghadāti wa-l-°ashīyyī yurīdūna wajjah ;

wa lā ta°du °aynāka °anhum turīdu zīnata-l-ḥayāit-d-dunya ;

wa lā tuṭ°i man °aghfalnā qalbahu °an dhikrinā

And contain your self in patience alongside all who. in the morning and in the night invoke their Sustainer, seeking His countenance.

And let not your eyes pass beyond them

in quest of the beauties of life of this world; and pay no heed to any whose heart We have rendered heedless of all remembrance of Us.

(Sūratu-l-Kahf 18:28)

In an authentic ḥadīth, the Prophet ﷺ said: “A person is likely to follow the faith of his friend, so look to whom you befriend.” [Abu Dawūd and at-Tirmidhī].

°Anās رضى الله عنه related that the Prophet ﷺ said, “I like to sit with those people who spend their time in dhikr especially those who pray fajr and then continue to do dhikr till the sun comes up spending their time in du‘ā° and tilāwat (Qur’ānic reading), as well as those who do dhikr in the late afternoon, before the sun sets. And I like this better than freeing four slaves from the children of °Ismā‘īl (إسماعيل).”

In another ḥadīth, the Prophet ﷺ said: “The example of a good companion and a bad companion is like that of the seller of musk, and the one who blows the blacksmith’s bellows. As for the seller of musk either he will give you some, or you can buy some from him, or at least you enjoy a pleasant smell from him. As for the one who blows the blacksmith’s bellows he will either will burn your clothes or you will get a bad smell from him.”

It is narrated in both al-Bukhārī and Muslim, on the authority of a large number of aṣḥāb رضى الله عنهم, that a man came up to the the Prophet ﷺ and asked: “What do you say of a man who loves a certain group of people but cannot be of them?” To this the Prophet ﷺ replied; “A person will be with whom he loves” and in another place he said, “A person is upon the religion of his friend.” (at-Tirmidhī)

The reader or listener may wonder what is the context of these remarks in view of the subject, ‘The Secrets of the Prophet ﷺ’? Earlier I said, “...from within the borders and bounds of parallel or synthetic °Islām there is no such possibility and one cannot even begin to speak of the Secrets of Muḥammad ﷺ as they simply don’t exist. In parallel or synthetic °Islām, Muḥammad ﷺ is simply a highly respected but, ultimately, an orphaned illiterate delivery boy.

What I am trying to clarify for the reader is that if you spend your time making friends from among the people of “parallel or synthetic °Islam” or Wahhabism or Salafism or Deobandism or Archaic Revivalism or neo-Kḥarajism, the chances are that you wind up being, as the Prophet ﷺ said, “On the religion of your friend.” and like the one who blows the blacksmith’s bellows either you will burn your clothes or get a bad smell from huffing and puffing.

In fact I will go even further than that and say, as I did recently in my essay on ‘Mercy’, that within sixty years after the Hijra of the Prophet ﷺ and the events that took place at Karabalā’, which witnessed the death and martyrdom of Sayyidinā al-Ḥusayn ؑ, all pre-tense that there was a wider world which really understood the Secret of the Prophet ﷺ was lost to the generality of the ‘nominal’ Muslim community. This can be discerned in the words of ʾIbn Taymiyyah many centuries later who declared, “Sixty years with an unjust ruler are preferable to one night with an ineffective one.”

The events of Karbalā’ put signed and sealed to any idea that spiritual guidance and Divine Guidance were to be looked for or expected of political leaders and that corruption and venality along with cruelty in the service of the ‘community’ and religious establishment would henceforth, with a few exceptions, rule, and that few of the scholars (ʿulamāʾ/علماء) could or would ever say anything about it, preferring stability, unanimity and silence instead.

“Don’t rock the boat!” would be, and remains today, the order of the day throughout the Muslim world, Sunni or Shīʿa, again with a few exceptions over the intervening centuries since the death of the Prophet ﷺ and, finally, the martyrdom of al-Ḥusayn ؑ.

The sole challenge to the stultifying silence and communal acceptance of corruption and cruelty was, and remains, the emergence of Ṣūfism which, arguably, alone has kept alive the secret of Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ, the “Mercy to all the worlds” or *raḥmatal-li-l-ʿālamīn*, by consistently and constantly teaching and, indeed, insisting on Mercy, Love, Justice, Freedom and actual realisation, as well as manifestation in one’s daily life, of the message of the Prophet ﷺ. Not as political expediency but as spiritual reality.

Throughout the centuries the light of ʾIslām was gradually extinguished as a *reality* foretold by the Prophet ﷺ who said, “A time will come in the near future when there will be nothing left of ʾIslām except its name. And there will be nothing left of the Qurʾān except its words. The *masājīd* of that age will be full of people, but will be empty of righteousness. Their scholars (ʿulamāʾ/علماء) will be the worst creatures under the heaven. Discord will rise from them and will come right back to them.” (al-Baihaqī: *al-Mishkāt Kitāb-ul-ʿIlm*)

Abū Hurayrah relates that the Prophet ﷺ said: “°Islām began as something strange, and it will become strange again just as it was at the beginning, so blessed are the strangers.” [Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim]

“... °Islām began as something strange, and it will become strange again just as it was at the beginning, so blessed are the strangers who restore what the people corrupt of my Sunnah.” [Sunan at-Tirmidhī (2630) [at-Tirmidhī grades it as good and authentic (*ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ*)]. °Abd Allāh bin °Amr b. al-°Ās relates that the Prophet ﷺ, said one day, when the Companions رضي الله عنهم were with him: “Blessed are the strangers.” He was then asked: “Who are the strangers, O Messenger of Allah?” He replied: “They are righteous people among many evil people who disobey them more than they obey them.” [Musnad Ahmad (2/177 and 2/222). This estrangement is typified by the small number of those who assist in doing right and the few of those who answer the call to Allāh ﷻ. Another aspect of this estrangement is the difficulty faced by the one who attempts to travel on the straight path without stumbling. Evil and iniquity will continue to increase and righteousness will continue to decrease as the time between the people and the era of prophethood grows yet longer. It becomes more and more difficult to achieve anything of benefit without getting involved in something detrimental as well. It is difficult to do what is best, due to the great number of impediments that discourage a person from even trying.

Standing against the flood of evil and iniquity and insisting on the primary message of the Prophet ﷺ of Mercy to all and malice toward none are the °awliyā° karam and the shuyūkh, murshids and pirs of the vairous turuq, ta°ifah and schools of taṣṣawwuf (تصوّف).

These are our lights in what is an increasingly dark age.

The blessed strangers are those who find their way against the flood of evil and iniquity to the safety of their teachings and guidance.

The zāwiyah, ribāt or tekke, and the circles of dīkr within them, established by teachers of Mercy are the lifeboats that take strangers lost in the oceans of evil and iniquity to the shores of Mercy.

Those who seek Mercy in the present age should know they will seldom find that Mercy in the al-Madāris or Kuliyātu-sh-Shari°ah.

If you want to find Mercy and the Teachings of Mercy you must seek out the Teachers of Mercy and they are none other than those we have mentioned of the ʿawliyāʾ karām and, even with them, you have to be on the lookout to be sure that you have not found a wolf in sheepskin, a shopkeeper pir, a seller of tickets for voyages that never reach shore, or pretenders who sell out to the political or religious establishment but who in reality stand with the forces of war and oppression against those of mercy and justice. You must find the real ones, the sincere ones and you must become them.

كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ

kataba rabbukum ʿalā nafsihi-r-raḥmah

Your Lord has written Mercy on His Self.

(Sūratu-l-ʿAnʿām 6:54)

And is this Mercy, even “more” (if such a thing can be said) than the Light or the Pen or the Tablet or even his pre-eternal existence that for me remains the greatest Secret of the Prophet ﷺ attested to by His ﷺ naming him ﷺ with His Name — ar-Raḥmah (الرَّحْمَةُ), who no one else has ever been named by the Name that is the First Named among all of His ﷺ Glorious and Beautiful Names (as-māʾallāhu-l-ḥusnā/أَسْمَاءُ اللَّهِ الْحُسْنَى).

Raḥām (Arabic: ر ح م, Hebrew: רַחַם) is the triconsonantal root of many Arabic and Hebrew words, and many of those words are used as names. It indicates mercy and sympathy. This root: raḥām whose literal meaning is the womb, and by extension carries the meaning, “to feel sympathy or pity” indicates something of the utmost tenderness which provides protection and nourishment, and from which all of creation is brought into being. The root raḥām has additional meanings of kinship, relationship, loving-kindness, mercy, compassion, and nourishing-tenderness.

Thus, both *raḥmān* and *raḥīm* arise from the womb from which all creation emerges and simultaneously conveys a sense of tenderness, loving-kindness, protection and nourishment. Divine mercy is reflected in the care a mother gives to the child that is born from her womb. The essence of the mother is mercy, and mercy is the first of the Names of Allāh ﷻ.

Secrets of the Prophet ﷺ

Thus the term *rahmān* describes the womb of all creation which is endlessly radiating, endlessly nourishing, regardless of who or what is receiving the endless flow of blessings.

This is the deep secret with which Allāh ﷻ has invested the Prophet ﷺ – the secret which is the true meaning of the Prophet ﷺ.

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ
حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ

laqadā jāʾakum rasūlum-min ʾaʿnūsikum ʿazīzun ʿalayhi mā ʿanittum
ḥarīṣun ʿalaykum bi-l-muʾminīna raʾūfur-rahīm

There hath come unto you a messenger from amongst you
concerned over your suffering, anxious over you,
towards the believers he is compassionate, merciful (*rahīm*).
(Sūratu-t-Tawbah 9:128)



Yes he ﷺ is the Light of Guidance (*nūru-l-hudā*/نور الهدى); yes he ﷺ is the Pen in the sense that the Pen is totally ʿummi with no words of its own and so only writes what He, Allāh ﷻ writes:

ن وَالْقَلَمِ وَمَا يَسْطُرُونَ

nūn ; wa-l-qalamī wa mā yaṣṭurūn

Nun. By the Pen and what they write
(Sūratu-l-Qalam 68:1)

and yes he ﷺ is the Tablet upon which the Words of Allāh ﷻ are written for it is he ﷺ who is told:

اقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ الْأَكْرَمُ

ʾiqra ; wa rabbuka-l-ʾakram

Read! And your Sustainer is the Most Generous
(Sūratu-l-ʾAlāq 96:3)

What he ﷺ reads is the Mercy on all of us that begins By the Name of Allah, The Universally Merciful, Individually Compassionate.



Secrets of the Prophet ﷺ أسرار النبي

It is this Mercy, this Raḥmah, that truly distinguishes the Prophet ﷺ.

It is this Mercy which makes him to be the True Seal of All the Prophets ﷺ who ever were, for of all the 124,000 Messengers ﷺ there is none like him; and if you look for that one distinguishing feature which sets him apart from all who went before him, it is that Allāh ﷻ has made him to be the Mercy to all the worlds.

مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِنْ رِجَالِكُمْ
وَلَكِنْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ ؕ

mā kāna muḥammadun °abā°a ḥadin mir-rijālikum
wa lakin rasūla-llāhi wa khātama-n-nabiyyīn

Muḥammad is not the father of any of your men,
but the Messenger of Allah and the Final Seal of the Prophets.
Allah has knowledge of all things.

(Sūratu-l-°Aḥzāb 33:40)

It is he ﷺ who is the Activated Truth of the Original Plan of Allāh ﷻ.

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً

wa-°idh qala rabbuka li-l-malā°ikati innī jā°ilun fi-l-arḍi khalīfah

and when your Sustainer said to the angels:

“Truly, I am about to establish upon earth one who shall inherit it.”

(Sūratu-l-Baqarah 2:30)

Allāh ﷻ says on the tongue of the Prophet ﷺ: “Oh, son of °Ādam! Indeed the truth has been revealed to you from your lord. whoever wants to believe in him, let him believe. And whoever wants to disbelieve, let him be a disbeliever. Indeed you are not good to a person, unless he is good to you. And you are not kind to your relatives, unless they are good to you. And you do not talk to a person, unless he talks to you. And you do not feed a person, unless he feeds you. And you are not just to a person, unless he is just to you. And you do not respect a person, unless he respects you. No one is superior over another. Indeed, the believers are: those who believe in Allāh and his Messengers, do good to those who are bad to them, are merciful to those who break ties of relationship with them, give to those who do not give to them, just to those who are unjust to them, talk to those who isolate themselves from them, are respectful to those who don’t respect them.” — This is the Mercy incarnate.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَآمِنُوا بِرَسُولِهِ يُؤْتِكُمْ كِفْلَيْنِ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ
وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ نُورًا تَمْشُونَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

yā ā ayyuha-l-ladhīna āmanū
°ittaqu-llāha wa °āminū bi-rasūlihi
yu°tikum kiflayni mir-raḥmatihi
wa yaj°al lakum nūran tamshūna bihi wa yaghfir lakum ;
wa-llahu ḡhafūrur-rahīm

Oh you who have [arrived at] belief!
Be aware of Allāh and believe in His Messenger.
He will give you a double portion of His Mercy
and grant you a Light by which to walk and forgive you.
Allāh is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful.
(Sūratu-l-Ḥadīd 57:28)



It is this understanding, in line with the deep sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ, that is both the foundation and content of the teachings of the °awliyā° karām and the shuyūkh, murshidūn and pirs we have mentioned. Indeed on the flag of Syed Mu°inuddīn Chishtī ؒ, on whose hand and though whose love so many people of the sub-continent came to °Islam, this is what was written:

With Mercy for All and Malice Toward None

سب سے محبت — نفرت کسی سے نہی

sub say maḡabbat – nafrat kissi say nahe

and it is this teaching precisely which is so obviously lacking today and which needs to be strongly emphasized rather than being relegated to commentary, or as a side issue, in the various madāris and schools of religious law and fiqh which, for the most part, concentrate on the outward rules, laws, regulations and so forth, that were codified, for the most part, in the 2nd-3rd century hijrah.

The world is thirsting and starving for love and mercy and if our teachers continue emphasizing mainly the rules and regulations of the *dīn* without really bringing this love and mercy to the forefront of all the teachings our situation as Muslims will continue as it is.

Please do not misunderstand what I am saying here. Muslims need to know how many sunnah prayers come after the ḍuḥr ṣalāt, they need to know what to say before they begin to eat, they need to know how you prepare a body for the grave and how to pray the Ṣalātu-l-Janazah. They need to know if any particular ḥadīth is sound (ṣaḥīḥ) or good (ḥasan) or weak (daʿīf) or fabricated or forged (mauduʿ). They have to know how many days one can continue to pray the prayers of the traveller, and can they join them, and when they can and when they can't.

We are not speaking here about abandoning the teaching of ʿusūlu-d-dīn or ʿusūlu-l-fiqh, but what we are talking about is the perspective from which these subjects are taught and, more importantly, on what basis the 'teachers' of those subjects are themselves grounded.

This is why I mentioned earlier, but must keep coming back to, the saying of the Prophet ﷺ, "A time will come when there will be nothing left of ʾIslām except its name. And there will be nothing left of the Qurʾān except its words. The masājīd of that age will be full of people, but will be empty of righteousness. Their scholars (ʿulemāʾ) will be the worst creatures under the heaven. Discord will rise from them and will come right back to them." (al-Baihaqi in *al-Mishkat Kitāb-ul ʿIlm*)

If you a Muslim reading this or hearing my words, ask yourself if this is not the situation across much of the Muslim world today?

Ask yourself why people fear us and hate us.

Ask yourself why this beautiful religion is held in such disgust and contempt by so many people around the world.

Ask yourself why there have more Muslims killed in Afghanistan by Muslims than by the mainly Christian invaders? Ask yourself why we routinely hear stories of acid being thrown in the faces of young girls who only are seeking an education? Ask yourself why almost every week we hear about Muslims from one sect or another going to the masājīd of what they perceive to be a rival sect, and blowing themselves up, killing their fellow Muslim worshippers? Ask why the rights of women, which the Prophet ﷺ championed and guaranteed, are scorned by so many Muslim men and their governments?

Ask yourself why you have to go through invasive searches just to get on an airplane? Or why men shave off their beards and women leave off their hijab so as not to be indentified as Muslims? Or why people often look fearfully at Muslims in the streets?

The answer to so many of those questions rests on what and how students (*aṭ-ṭalāb*/الطلاب) are taught and by whom they are taught and, most important, on the understanding of their teachers on what the real basis of the sunnah or the Way of the Prophet ﷺ consists.

From our own perspective the real basis of the sunnah and the secret of the secret of the Prophet ﷺ is contained in this °āyat which we have already quoted, and, °inshallāh, will continue to quote:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

wa māā °arsalnāka °illā-rahḡmatal-li-l-°ālamīn

And We have not sent you except as a Mercy for all the worlds.

(Sūratu-l-°Ambiyā° 21:107)

When both the teachers and the teaching are grounded in Mercy, and by extension Love and Peace and Justice, and then the students, when they act to apply what they have learned, act on the those principles, then their actions have at their core and heart — Mercy.

It is therefore our firm recommendation that those who seek to know and understand °Islām shold seek their teachers from among the awliyā° karām and shuyukḡ, murshīdūn and pirs of the Şūfis, and especially those *turūqu-ş-şufiyyah*, who directly trace their lineage to Sayyidina °Alī ؑ in accord with the ḡadīth:

انا مدينة العلم وعلي بابها

°Ali ؑ reported: “The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said: ‘I am the city of knowledge and °Ali is its gate’ [at-Tirmidhī and al-Ḥākim]. In another narration on the authority of °Ali ؑ, the Prophet ﷺ said: “I am the house of wisdom and °Alī ؑ is its door” [at-Tirmidhī]. Also al-Bazzar, and at-Tabaranī in his *al-°Awsat*, on the authority of Jābir bin °Abdullāh, al-Ḥākim and al-°Uqayli in his *al-Du°afa*, as well as Ibn °Adi on the authority of Ibn °Umar, that °Alī ؑ reported: “The Prophet ﷺ said: ‘I am the city of knowledge and °Alī ؑ is its gate.’” [at-Tirmidhī and al-Ḥākim].

I am fully aware in quoting this ḥadīth that Albānī declared the ḥadīth to be fabricated (*mawḍūʿ* / الموضوع). Darāqutnī labeled the ḥadīth as shaky (*mudtarib*), both in ʿisnād (إسناد) and text (*matn* / متن) and Qurtubī said about this ḥadīth in *al-Jamaʿ li Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*: “This ḥadīth is false (*bāṭil* / باطل)”. adh-Dḥāhabī considered it a forgery and included it in his book on forged ʾaḥādīth. The difference among the ḥadīth masters here is regarding the chain of transmission (*sanad* / سند) and if it is weak (*daʿīf* / ضعيف) or sufficiently established to be considered sound but, importantly, there is no argument concerning its *meaning* which is sound (*ḥasan* / حسن).

An explanation often given is that the Prophet ﷺ is the city of all knowledge and that the main gates to this knowledge are the four Khulafāʾu-r-Rashidūn (الخلفاء الراشدون), and since classical cities had four gates, ʿAlī ؑ is one of those gates. This is the explanation of the great *māturīdī* ʾimām, Abu Muʿin al-Nasafī, in *Tabsirat al-Adilla*.

There is also a further narration recorded by at-Tirmidhī on the authority of ʿAlī ؑ: “so who desires knowledge should come through the gate”, and in another [narration] from at-Tirmidhī on the authority of ʿAlī ؑ: “The Messenger ﷺ said, ‘I am the house of wisdom and ʿAlī is its door.’” ʾIsʿaf ar-Raghibīn (margin of *Nur al-ʾAbsar*), Muhammad b. ʿAlī as-Sabban al-Miṣrī, page 156:

أنا دار الحكمة وعلي بابها

Shaykh Muḥammad al-Jamal in *Music of the Soul* writes, “ʿAlī ؑ is the esoteric message of Muḥammad ﷺ. He is the keeper of the secrets of the knowers. As he received knowledge from the Prophet ﷺ he is our gateway to that knowledge.”

انا مدينة العلم وعلي بابها. لا أحد يدخل البيت إلا من خلال البوابة.

“I am the city of knowledge, and ʿAlī is its door.

Nobody enters the house except through the door.”

وَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ أَبْوَابِهَا ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

waʾtu-l-buyūta min ʾabāwābiha wa ʾttaqu-llāha laʾallakum tuflihūn

So enter houses by their doors

and be aware of Allāh, so that hopefully you will be successful.

(Suratu-l-Baqarah 2:189)

Ibn ʿAbbās, quoted the Prophet ﷺ as saying: “On the night of the *miʿrāj* (the ascension part of the night journey), when I was in the presence of Allāh ﷻ, He talked with me in confidence. Whatever I learned, I taught to ʿAlī. He is the gate to my knowledge.”

The great writer, Muʿaffaq Bin Aḥmad Khawarizmī, narrated the same from the Holy Prophet ﷺ in this way: “Jibrīl brought me a carpet from Paradise. I sat on it until I was brought near my Lord. Then He talked with me and told me secret things. Whatever I learned was communicated by me to ʿAlī. He is the gate of my knowledge.” Then the Holy Prophet ﷺ called ʿAlī رضى الله عنه and said, “You are the knowledge that links me and my Community.”

ʿImām Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī in his *Fī Bayan ʿIlm al-Ladunī* (a.k.a. *Risālah al-Laduniyyah*), reported ʿAlī رضى الله عنه as saying: “The Prophet ﷺ put his tongue in my mouth. From the saliva of the Prophet ﷺ, 1,000 chapters of knowledge were revealed to me, and from each chapter another 1,000 chapters were revealed to me.”

Also it is reported in *Sharh-e-Risālah Fathu-l-Mubīn* of at-Tirmidhī that Ibn ʿAbbās related the following ḥadīth: “Knowledge has ten parts. Nine parts are exclusively for ʿAlī, and the remaining tenth part is for all of mankind. Of that one part, too, ʿAlī was granted the greatest share.”

يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا ؕ
وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

yuʿti-l-ḥikmata mañy-yashāʾ ;
wa man yuʿta-l-ḥikmata faqadā ʿūtiya khayran kathīrā ;
wa mā yadhḍhakkaru ʿillāʾ ʿulu-l-ʿalbābā

He gives wisdom to whoever He wills
and he who has been given wisdom has been given great good.
But no one pays heed but people of intelligence.
(Sūratu-l-Baqarah 2:269)



The point I am trying to make clear is that the noble *shuyukh* of the *tūruqu-s-ṣuffiyah* who trace their lineage to the Prophet ﷺ through ʿAlī رضى الله عنه are the most direct inheritors of the Secret of the Prophet ﷺ.

This being the case, if one is seeking to get in contact with that Secret, the best chance one has is to put one's hand in the hand of the one who put his hand in the hand of one who put his hand in the hand of one who put his hand in the hand of the Prophet ﷺ and the Hand of Allāh ﷻ is above their hands.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ
فَمَنْ نَكَثَ فَإِنَّمَا يَنْكُثُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ
وَمَنْ أَوْفَى بِمَا عَاهَدَ عَلَيْهِ اللَّهُ فَسَيُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا

°inna-lladhīna yubāyi°ūnaka °innamā yubāyi°ūna-llah :
yadu-llāhi fawqa °aydihim.

faman nakathā fa °innamā yankuthu °ala nafsih :
wa man °awfa bimā °āhada °alayhu-llāha fasayu°tihi °ajran °adhīmā

Those who pledge you their allegiance pledge allegiance to Allāh.

The Hand of Allāh is above their hands.

He who breaks his pledge only breaks it against himself.

But as for him who fulfils the contract he has made with Allāh,

We will pay him an immense reward.

(Sūratu-l-Fath 48:10)



Examine closely the history of the Sūfī Orders. You will not find people who throw acid in the faces of girl students, for they know the importance of seeking knowledge in accord with the ḥadīth “Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim”; you will not find men who go into the masājīd of other schools or sects and blow themselves and other believers up, for they know that the Prophet ﷺ has informed us that “differences between the believers are a mercy”; and more than that they know without a doubt that Mercy itself is the very basis of every act and every thought in accord with what we have repeated, and will repeat, over and over.

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ

wa mālā °arsalnākā °illā-rahmatal-li-l-°ālamīn

And We have not sent you except as a Mercy for all the worlds.

(Sūratu-l-°Ambiyā° 21:107)

This is at the very core and is the emphasis of all of the teachings of the °awliyā° karām, of the noble shuyukh, murshidun and pirs of the turuq şuffiyah (طرق الصوفية) from beginning to end.

Yes, they have in the past, and will continue, inshallāh, in the future, to teach the knowledge which is obligatory (*farḍ °ayn*) that covers the fundamentals of °Islāmic beliefs, for seeking this knowledge is an obligatory duty upon every Muslim as it is the knowledge pertaining to °Islāmic faith, acts of worship, and the necessary transactions in one's daily dealings.

Yes, they have in the past, and will continue, inshallāh, in the future, to make sure their students are grounded in all branches of Islamic şhari°ah, such as: tafsīr (Qu°ānic exegeses), fiqh, ḥadīth sciences (°ulumu-l-ḥadīth/علم الحديث), sīrah (سيرة) or the biography of the Prophet ﷺ as well as Islamic political science and general Islamic history (*as-siyasah islamiyyah*), and they will make sure their students know their Arabic language and grammar (*al-qawā°id/القواعد*) in order that they may both read and understand the Qur°ān.

BUT!

They will be sure that every student, every murīd, every ṭālib knows that above and beyond and below and before everything is MERCY.

This is the difference between the tūruq aş-şuffiyah and the various schools of şhari°ah, fiqh, usūl-d-dīn and madāras (المدارس العامة).

For the şūfī, if he or she is to take the Way, the way they take must be based first and foremost on Mercy and the qualities which flow from Mercy — Peace and Justice and Love and Freedom.

Yes ...FREEDOM...because in *truth* you cannot force people to Love. You cannot put a pistol up against anyone's head, or a rifle in their guts or a sword at their throats or put a bomb behind their backs and make them love you or believe you or follow you or trust you.

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ ۖ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ ۚ

lā °ikrāha fi-d-dīni ; qadā tabayyana-r-rushḍu mina-l-ghayy

There is no compulsion in religion:
truly the right way has become clearly distinct from the wrong!
(Sūratu-l-Baqarah 2:256)

Shaykh Muḥammad al-Jamal in the *Music of the Soul* writes, “This knowledge – Taṣawwuf – illuminates the knowers like the sun. It is the source of all lights and of all the secrets. It is the way of the courtesy, the love, the knowledge of Allāh ﷻ, from Him to Him...For this seekers must be ready to make their heart the house of Allāh ﷻ, empty of all but Allāh ﷻ, forgetting all the unnecessary sciences, filled with love, to be present at the table of His Lord and to know Allāh ﷻ by Allāh ﷻ...following the Way of Truth, subsisting in the Presence of Allāh ﷻ.

“The essence of the science of Taṣawwuf is Allāh ﷻ, Who gives all the secrets of the spirit and the soul. Those who trust this science are truly believers in Allāh ﷻ. Those who study [and practice] it are the most special of the special – the most near of those who are near. One who knows this science speaks with courtesy [and is] like a shining star on the sea the depths of which cannot be fathomed. You must come to the shore of this sea to begin to know the subtle secrets of the soul, to be washed in its water which takes you from the density of this earth to the world of the soul and the light.”

وَدَاعِيًا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَسِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا

wa da‘iyan ila-llāhi bi-‘idhnihi wa sirājan munirā

And a caller to Allāh by His permission and an illuminating lamp.

(Sūratu-l-‘Aḥzab 33:46)

This is of the secret *and* the politeness of the Prophet ﷺ, who calls to Allāh ﷻ by *His* Permission not by *his* desire, because he has no desire but His Desire to be known – in line with a well known parable cited by some (who claim it to be a ḥadīth) which reads, “I was a Hidden Treasure and I desired to be known, so I created a creation to which I made Myself known – then they knew Me.” We are aware that many scholars deny the validity of this being a ḥadīth and we agree with them, but its meaning nonetheless is true, as we can understand from the ‘āyat, the last line of which can also be understood, according to Ibn ‘Abbās, as, “that they may know Me”.

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ

wa mā khalaqtu-l-jinna wa-l-‘insa illā li-ya‘budūn

I have not created the jinn and humans except to worship Me.

(Sūratu-dh-Dhariyat 51:56)

إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ

°in kuñtum tuḥibbūna-llāha fa-ittabi°unī yuḥbibkumu-llāh...

“If you love Allāh then follow me so Allāh will love you ...”

(Sūrah °Āl-°Imrān 3:31)

If you are really looking for the truth and the secret of the Prophet ﷺ forget the compliant °ulemā° who sit with the tyrants and suck up to the despots and are just involved in business as usual.

Leave the masājid whose spirituality consists of nothing but “pot luck °Islām”. Give your back to the so-called salafis, and the de-obandis and the wahhabis, and neo-kḥarijites of the present day so-called °Islāmic world. They are empty. They are nothing and they know nothing more that do this do that and don’t do this and don’t do that. Empty shells. Be polite but forget them and seek the truth for it is the truth that will set you free and you will find this truth at the hands of those who have their hands in the hand of the Rasūl ﷺ and his wārith ﷺ and all of those who descend from him and them.

It is in their hands you will find the ever-living truth of the secret of Muḥammad ﷺ who was and is, “A mercy for all the worlds.”

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

°inna-llaha wa malāā°ikatahu yuṣallūna °ala-n-nabiyy:
yāā °ayyuha-l-latdhīna °āmanū ṣallū °alayhi wa sallimū taslīmā

Surely Allāh and His angels bless the Prophet;

O you who believe!

call down blessings on him

and ask for complete peace and safety for him.

(Sūratu-l-°Aḥzāb 33:56)



صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم

May Allāh grant peace and blessings to him and his family

(amīn)

Moderate, pluralistic Ṣūfī ʿimāms are the front line against the most violent forms of ʿIslām. Their flag is the one that reads, “With Love for All and Malice toward None”. In the most radical parts of the Muslim world, Ṣūfī leaders risk their lives for their tolerant beliefs. Ṣūfism is the most pluralistic incarnation of Islam — accessible to the learned and the ignorant, the faithful and nonbelievers — and is thus a uniquely valuable bridge between East and West.

The great Ṣūfī saints like the 13th-century Persian poet Rumi held that all existence and all religions were one, all manifestations of the same divine reality. What was important was not the empty ritual of the mosque, church, synagogue or temple, but the striving to understand that divinity can best be reached through the gateway of the human heart: that we all can find paradise within us, if we know where to look and love rather judge.

While the West remains blind to the divisions and distinctions within Islam, the challenge posed by the Ṣūfī vision of the faith is not lost on the extremists. This was shown most violently on July 2, when the Pakistani Ṭaliban organized a double-suicide bombing of the Data Darbar, the largest Sufi shrine in Lahore, Pakistan’s second-largest city. The attack took place on a Thursday night, when the shrine was at its busiest; 42 people were killed and 175 were injured.

The tomb of Hajji Ṣaḥib of Turangzai, a Ṣūfī persecuted under British colonial rule for his social work — has been forcibly turned into a Ṭaliban headquarters. Two shrines near Peshawar, the mausoleum of Bahadar Baba and the shrine of Abu Saeed Baba, have been destroyed by rocket fire.

Symbolically, however, the most devastating Ṭaliban attack occurred last spring at the shrine of the 17th-century poet-saint Rahman Baba, at the foot of the Khyber Pass in northwest Pakistan. For centuries, the complex has been a place for musicians and poets to gather, and Raḥman Baba’s ṽerses had long made him the national poet of the Pashtuns living on both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. “I am a lover, and I deal in love,” wrote the saint. “Sow flowers,/ so your surroundings become a garden./ Don’t sow thorns; for they will prick your feet./ We are all one body./ Whoever tortures another, wounds himself.”

Then, about a decade ago, a Saʿudi-financed religious school, or madrasa, was built at the end of the path leading to the shrine. Soon its students took it upon themselves to halt what they see as the un-Islamic practices of Raḥman Baba’s admirers. When I last visited it in 2003, the shrine-keeper, Tila Muḥammed, described how young students were coming regularly to complain that his shrine was a center of idolatry and immorality.

“My family have been singing here for generations,” he told me. “But now these madrasa students come and tell us that what we do is wrong. They tell women to stay at home. This used to be a place where people came to get peace of mind. Now when they come here they just encounter more problems.”

Then, one morning in early March 2009, a group of Pakistani Taliban arrived at the shrine before dawn and placed dynamite packages around the squinches supporting the shrine’s dome. In the ensuing explosion, the mausoleum was destroyed, but at least nobody was killed. The Pakistani Taliban quickly took credit, blaming the shrine’s administrators for allowing women to pray and seek healing there.

The good news is that Šūfīs, though mild, are also resilient. While the Wahhabis have become dominant in northern Pakistan ever since we chose to finance their fight against the Soviets in Afghanistan, things are different in Sindh Province in southern Pakistan. Šūfīs are putting up a strong resistance on behalf of the pluralist, composite culture that emerged in the course of a thousand years of cohabitation between Hinduism and Islam.

Last year, when I visited a shrine of the saint Lal Shahbaz Qalandar in the town of Sehwan, I was astonished by the strength and the openness of the feelings against those puritan mullahs who criticize as heresy all homage to Šūfī ʿawliyāʾ.

“I feel that it is my duty to protect both the Šūfī saints, just as they have protected me,” one woman told me. “Today in our Pakistan there are so many of these mullahs and Wahhabis who say that to pay respect to the saints in their shrines is heresy. Those hypocrites! They sit there reading their law books and arguing about how long their beards should be, and fail to listen to the true message of the prophet.” (“I have not sent you save as a mercy to all beings.”)

A few years back in 1992 there was a huge outcry against the destruction in India of the Babri masji in Ayodhya, a city in Uttar Pradesh. It was destroyed when a political rally developed into a riot involving 150,000 people organized the Hindu fundamentalist Bharatiya Janata Party and allied organizations. Muslims were up in arms and there was wide spread disturbances and rioting as a result.

PESHAWAR: Ten worshippers, including a child, were killed and 30 others injured when a powerful bomb blast ripped through a mosque in Nowshera in northwest Pakistan today.

The explosion targeted the mosque inside Akhun Punjo Baba mazar (shrine) in Akbarpura area of Nowshera, about 15 km from Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa capital Peshawar.

Scores of people were offering Friday prayers at the mosque while hundreds had gathered to take food from a 'langar' or community kitchen.

Ten worshippers, including a child, were killed, police said and at least 30 others were injured and the condition of eight was described by officials as serious....The Taliban have claimed responsibility for this and several recent attacks on mosques in cities across Pakistan, including Lahore and Karachi.

JAMRUD, Pakistan (AFP) — A suicide bomber blew himself up during Friday prayers at a packed Pakistan mosque, leaving around 50 dead and scores wounded in one of the bloodiest recent attacks in the nation.

Blood-soaked caps, shoes and shirts lay around the flattened mosque, where dazed survivors looked on as rescue workers dug bodies out of the rubble. "People may have taken three or four dead bodies on their own, but from hospital reports the total dead recorded is 48 and the wounded are 153," Fida Mohammad Bangash, a senior administration official in Khyber the Dawn.

Then here is another item from Jakarta in Indonesia from Asia News. "A suicide bomber blew himself up today at Taka mosque in Ciberon (West Java) a town about 300 km from Jakarta. The toll is about 28 wounded, including several policemen. The suicide bombing and took place shortly before the usual Friday prayers, while the faithful were gathering inside the building.

According to authorities the attack was organized by a group of Salafi Islamic terrorists in revenge for the recent operations carried out by the police.

Or again Afghan officials say at least 17 people were killed and 36 injured by a suicide bomber who blew himself up at the entrance of Kandahar's main mosque June 1. The bomber detonated his explosives during a mourning ceremony for a slain Islamic cleric.

Naseer Ahmad Niazi, the director of Kandahar's Mmirwais Hospital said later that the bodies of at least 20 people had been brought to his facility by the early afternoon. Afghan officials at the scene of the explosion said they fear the death toll eventually could top 50.

We are told that a Muslim must respect and protect the holy places where the People of the Book worship and protect them. In the Qur'ān, the places of worship of the People of the Book, ie. monasteries, churches and synagogues, are mentioned as places of worship protected by Allāh ﷻ.

Allāh ﷻ says,

وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَهْدَمَتْ صَوَامِعُ وَبِيَعٌ وَصَلَوَاتٌ وَمَسَاجِدُ
يُذَكَّرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا ؕ
وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُهُ ؕ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَ

wa lawla daḥu-llāhi-n-nāsa baḥdahum bi-baḥdin
lahuddimat ṣawāmiḥu wa biyaḥun wa ṣalawātun wa masājidu yudḥkaru
fihā ḥismu-llāhi kathīran ;

wa layanṣuranna-llāhu man yansuruḥu : ḥinna-llaha la qawiiyyun ḥaziz

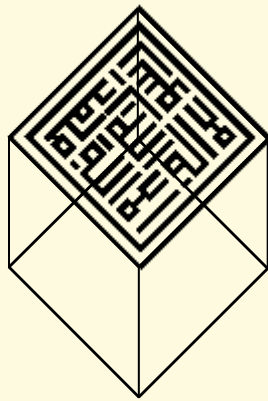
...if Allāh had not driven some people back by means of others,
monasteries, churches, synagogues and mosques,
where the name of Allāh is mentioned much,
would have been pulled down and destroyed.

Allāh will certainly help those who help Him.

Allāh is All-Strong, All Mighty.

(Sūratu-l-Ḥajj, 22:40)

The Prophet ﷺ said: “There will come a time for my people when there will remain nothing of the Qur'ān except its outward form and nothing of ḥIslām except its name and they will call themselves by this name even though they are the people furthest from it. The masājid will be full of people but they will be empty of right guidance. The religious leaders (*fuqahāʿ* فقهاء) of that day will be the most evil religious leaders under the heavens; sedition and dissension (*fitnah*) will go out from them and return to them.” ibn Babuya
Is anybody listening?



noon hierographs

green mountain

virginia

usa